

# WINDOW ON MANNA

Summer 2020

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# Founders Corner

Dear Friends,  
It has been a tumultuous year, and we at MANNA have been working hard to address the impact of COVID-19 on our community. Our Homeownership Center has shifted its focus to address the unique impacts of the pandemic on the home-buying process. Housing Counselors have focused on providing assistance to those most at risk, including the District's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and programs offered by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). MANNA also supports our clients through new fundraising efforts, including participation in #GivingNowTuesday and the creation of a rental assistance fund.

Despite setbacks relating to COVID-19, MANNA and our partners began construction on the Hanover Courts and Tivoli Gardens preservation rental projects. Located in Ward 8 and Ward 5, respectively, the Hanover Courts and Tivoli Gardens projects are undertaking essential renovations to improve 125 units in these communities. For more information, please see the article highlighting the two developments on Page 5. MANNA has also seen immense progress on the Hunter Place project, and nearing final stages of construction. Siding on the last house was recently finished, and the property was given permanent electric service. We are tremendously proud and excited by our continued progress on all three projects.

Finally, please save the date for our annual Friends of MANNA reception. We are excited to announce that despite the issues we are all currently facing, MANNA still intends to shine a spotlight on the wonderful people we serve and the many beneficiaries who make our work possible. Due to existing health concerns and limitations, MANNA will host our first ever **Virtual Friends of MANNA on Thursday November 5th**. Please stay tuned for details regarding how we will proceed with the event. These are trying times, but we look forward to gathering as a community to celebrate the MANNA community's accomplishments over the last year.

Blessings and prayers to you and yours,

Rev. Jim Dickerson  
Founder & CEO



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## Window on MANNA

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# MANNA's COVID-19 Response

## How We Are Continuing Our Services:

MANNA has been closely monitoring federal, state, and local updates about the coronavirus disease and have closed our offices to visitors as of March 17th. Additionally, all in-person meetings, events, and workshops are cancelled.

This closing DOES NOT impact the services MANNA is offering clients and MANNA is continuing to offer services to clients via call/zoom/email. All staff are currently available and can be reached via their normal telephone/email. You can find email addresses to our staff on our website at <http://mannadc.org/our-people/>

## How You Can Protect Yourself:

In accordance with the guidelines by the CDC, you should take the following steps to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19:

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home as much as possible
- Put distance between yourself and other people (at least six feet)
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily

## How You Can Help DC Residents:

As the DC area slowly reopens, families without stable housing remain at risk. These families are the hardest hit amidst this public health and housing crisis and for this, these are the families we serve. Many are facing a loss of income and uncertain futures, and for families living in overcrowded, unhealthy, or unaffordable circumstances, it's even worse.

In these uncertain times, we rely on your help more than ever. Support MANNA's continued work through the COVID-19 crisis:

- Fund a credit check for individuals in need of financial coaching. As many low and moderate-income residents navigate the new economy, our credit counseling services are needed more than ever.
- An increase in unemployment has led made it increasingly difficult for rent-burdened individuals to make payments.
- Give general operating support to allow MANNA to use funds where it will have the most impact.

To donate to a specific fund, please indicate where you would like your donation to go on the Donor Scroll or on your return envelope. You can donate by mailing a check to MANNA's Offices or giving at [mannadc.org/donate](http://mannadc.org/donate). If you have any questions about MANNA's COVID response fund, please contact Joshua Galvez, Director of Corporate Development, at [jgalvez@mannadc.org](mailto:jgalvez@mannadc.org). No MANNA tenants are at risk of eviction during this time.

We send warm wishes and hope you are safe and well.

# 100 Years of Whitelaw

On Thursday, February 4, 2020, MANNA hosted the "100 Years of Whitelaw" panel at the historic Whitelaw building.

The Whitelaw building was first constructed in 1919 as a hotel for African-American visitors to D.C. In 1991, MANNA combined historic and low-income housing tax to restore the building to its full potential. It currently hosts 32 affordable rental housing apartments for lower-income residents. It's also a popular venue for community events and historic tours.

The panel, moderated by Washington Post columnist Courtland Milloy, discussed the past, present, and future of the Whitelaw building and surrounding Shaw neighborhood. Community leaders Patricia Mitchell (Executive Vice President, Industrial Bank), Alex Padro (Founder, Shaw Main Streets, and Commissioner of ANC 6E01), Rev. Tyrone Queen (Pastor, Mt. Sinai Baptist Church), Shellée Haynesworth (Creator, "Black Broadway on U" Project), and Ronnie McGhee (Principle, R. McGhee & Associates) contributed their expertise and experience to the conversation. The event was well-attended, with around 70 community activists, leaders, and both former and current Whitelaw residents present.





# Bread of Life Fund

In late 2019, MANNA launched the **Bread of Life Fund** in partnership with the Bread of Life Church to be used towards closing costs for MANNA Homebuyers purchasing a home. Closing costs are often overlooked as a cost in the homebuying process and frequently come as a surprise to new homeowners.



Home Ownership Center Director TC Caviness (Left), Bread of Life Church Director Mike Little (Center), and President and CEO of MANNA, Reverend Jim Dickerson (Right) gather to celebrate the Bread of Life Fund.

TC Caviness, the Director of the Homeownership Center and Sales, developed the idea in partnership with Mike Little of the Bread of Life Church. Since the church's founding in 1991, they've heavily focused their efforts on economic concerns in the District. "We believe that God wants there to be enough for everyone and we should share," said Mr. Little. "Historically, the church has mostly focused on immediate need, but I would like to do more around long-term needs like building equity."

"For us, giving to MANNA is about justice and equity," said Mr. Little. "The system leaves people of color in particular out of homeownership, which is one of the greatest wealth builders."

"Reverend Jim, MANNA's CEO, has been a leading voice for equality around homeownership for years. We've admired him from close and from afar", said Mr. Little. "We are the ones who benefit from our connection with MANNA. We are excited to be a part of this fund and feel blessed by this partnership."

"The Bread of Life Church's Homebuyers' Fund makes a difference whether a mortgage-ready, qualified affordable MANNA homebuyer can cover unanticipated settlement costs required by a lender," said MANNA CEO Rev. Jim Dickerson. "Bread of Life's assistance fund fills a gap and meets a critical need for MANNA homebuyers to fulfill their dreams." "The fund is about meeting people where they are – and not try to force them to be somewhere they aren't," Mr. Caviness added.

So far, the Bread of Life Church has donated \$30,000 to the Bread of Life Fund, which will help 12 families afford the closing costs on newly purchased homes. To learn more or make a donation to the Bread of Life Fund, please contact Joshua Galvez,

## New Faces of MANNA

### LaTanya McLendon



This February, LaTanya McLendon was hired as MANNA's newest Housing Counselor. McLendon, originally from Washington, DC, attended University of the District of Columbia (UDC), attaining her bachelor's degree in Psychology.

McLendon has previously worked at the intersection of housing and personal mental health. For the past seven years, she has worked as a mental health case manager, specializing in issues relating to housing. She first heard about MANNA around 20 years ago, both through community events and word of mouth.

While in the position, McLendon hopes to spread the word about the housing counseling MANNA offers. She said, "She hopes to ensure, there is a stronger presence in my community. I want the people to know what MANNA does, and I want them to use MANNA... it can get them to their goal of housing." Though her first few weeks were tumultuous due to the COVID-19 pandemic, McLendon remains excited about her work. "MANNA has been very supportive," she said. "I got into a family really quick."

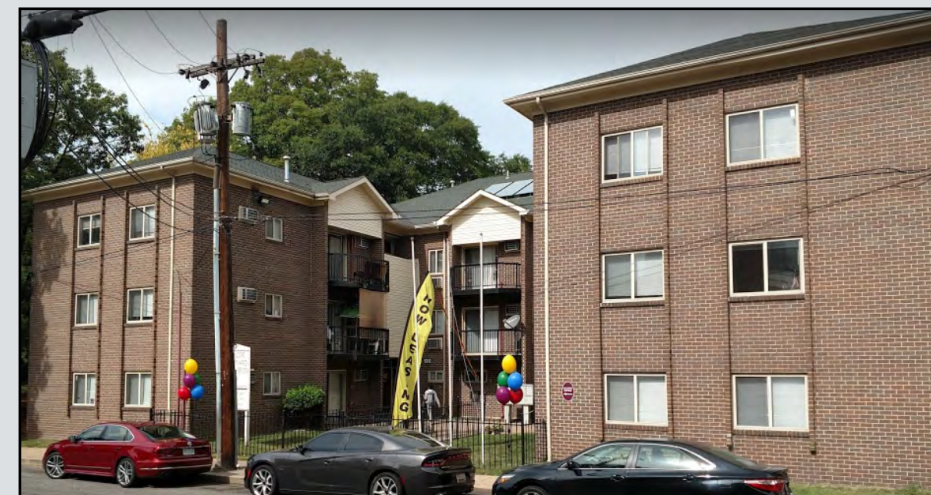
# Hanover Courts and Tivoli Gardens



New units of affordable housing in Washington DC's 8th Ward at MANNA's new development, Hanover Courts.

MANNA recently broke ground on new developments in Wards 5 and 8. Together, the new Hanover Courts and Tivoli Gardens developments create 131 new units of affordable rental housing.

The projects are funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LI-HTC) provided by the District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA) and the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).



Previously managed by a notorious slumlord, the Tivoli Gardens development offers another 49 units of affordable housing in Washington DC's 5th Ward.

At Tivoli Gardens, previously owned by a notorious slumlord, MANNA will rehabilitate all 49 units on the property and convert the 22 one-bedroom units to two- or three-bedroom spaces. In preparation for the development, Tivoli Gardens residents exercised their Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) rights to form the Tivoli Gardens Unidos Tenants Association (TGUTA), which, with the help of MANNA, TM & Associates, and EquityPlus, purchased

all 49 units. Renovations include new central heating, air conditioning, updated kitchens, and the establishment of laundry facilities on-site. Tivoli Gardens has eight units for individuals earning 30 percent Area Median Income, with twenty-nine apartments for those earning 50 percent Area Median Income. There are also opportunities to utilize Local Rent Supplemental Program vouchers to obtain Permanent Supportive Housing services at the complex. Tivoli Gardens is located in Ward 5's Fort Totten neighborhood at 4811 North Capitol St., NW.

MANNA will develop Hanover Court's 82 units with a focus on historic preservation. 74 existing apartments will be renovated, and eight new units will be constructed. The Hanover Courts complex had lapsed regular maintenance, and many of its utilities function poorly. With that in mind, new kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring will be installed in the units. Energy efficient lighting and refrigerators will also be provided. Nine units will be available to those earning up to 30 percent Area Median Income, 41 units will be reserved for those earning 50 percent Area Median Income, and an additional 32 units will be restricted to individuals and families earning 60 percent Area Median Income. Hanover Court is located at 2400-2410 Hartford St. SE, in Ward 8.

We are ecstatic to bring more modern, livable, and affordable housing to the District through these new projects!



## In memory of our dear friend, Rita Fair



Rita Fair, with MANNA's President and CEO, Rev. Jim Dickerson (Left) and Board Member Douglas Bibby (Right).

Sadly, on March 22nd, 2020, Rita Fair, a MANNA advocate, supporter, John Darr Award Recipient, and friend passed away. Rita was an experienced leader in the fields of housing and real estate finance.

Rita served as a member of MANNA's Leadership Committee in the early 2000s. As a member of the Leadership Committee, one of Rita's primary tasks was to organize MANNA's annual reception and auction. Over the years, she brought in many of MANNA's auction items and corporate sponsorships.

When asked what motivated her to support affordable housing, Rita said, "it's important to have a place to call home. Although it may seem like the work MANNA does is just a drop in the bucket, something positive can be done and I want to be part of it."

"Rita's commitment to affordable housing and helping people move out of poverty and sharing the benefits of our community is unwavering and unquestionable. We're the beneficiaries of her passion and commitment and are eternally grateful," said MANNA CEO & Founder Rev. Jim Dickerson. "While we grieve Rita's loss, we celebrate her life even more!"

## In memory of our dear friend, Todd Lee

Sadly, on January 1st, 2020, a MANNA advocate, supporter, Friends of Manna awardee, and friend, passed away.



Todd Lee (Center) and friends at Friends of MANNA in 2019.

Todd Lee was an experienced leader in the field of commercial and multifamily real estate finance with a diverse background in multiple areas of investment and lending across multiple property types throughout the DC area.

Todd acquired a B.B.A. in finance from the College of William & Mary. In his impressive career, Todd served as the Assistant Vice President for Community Development Lending at Nations Bank NA (1992-1996), Assistant Vice President for Commercial Real Estate at Industrial Bank (1996-1997), Vice President for Commercial Real Estate at Chevy Chase Bank (1997-2000), Vice President for

Real Estate Structured Debt at Bank of America (2000-2001), Vice President for Multifamily Customer Management at Fannie Mae (2001-2015), and Executive Director & CEO at the DC Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA) from 2016-2020.

"What a loss," said MANNA CEO & Founder Rev. Jim Dickerson. "Todd was totally dedicated to the city and helping people with housing and moving up the economic ladder. He was a great friend to nonprofits like MANNA and recognized that MANNA and DCHFA had the same mission. We miss him already and will miss him for years to come."

## In memory of our dear friend, Edith Cromwell



After 17 years of service, Edith Cromwell left a lasting impression on MANNA. Her legacy is imbued in this organization for years to come.

We are sad to announce that Edith Cromwell, D.C. community advocate, former MANNA employee, and dear friend, passed away on April 27th, 2020. Born in 1934, Edith is a native Washingtonian. After graduating from Spingarn High School, Edith worked in the community assisting victims of domestic violence.

She continued supporting her community, working first for the Washington Hospital Center later for the U.S. Information Agency. Edith then worked at the Anacostia Economic Development Center (AEDC) during its early years in the 1970's. During this time, she also sold real estate in Washington's Anacostia neighborhood. It was during this experience Edith first interacted with MANNA.

Edith worked for MANNA for 17 years, creating and developing our first marketing department. Her expertise and communications skills allowed her to manage MANNA's re-opening of the historic Whitelaw building. Edith was also responsible for marketing MANNA's development on 14th and Belmont Streets NW in the early 1990's. This project was the first in the area meant for low-income homeownership, and Edith connected with the community in order to effectively market the development.

Even after Edith's retirement, she was always there for others. She attended yearly AEDC brunches and helped plan fundraiser luncheons. She connected with local D.C. councilmembers and politicians, including Mayor Marion Barry. According to her daughter, Edith also enjoyed traveling and attending family celebrations.

Edith's impact on her community cannot be overstated. "[Edith] expressed the core values and spirit of MANNA," Reverend Jim Dickerson said. "She passed on the torch...she inspired many others, and she called all of us to our highest and best selves." One of Edith's daughters and former MANNA employee, Sheila Miles, said she "didn't want to leave anyone out...she wanted to make sure people were on target. She was passionate about getting families into affordable housing." MANNA named the Cromwell condominium association in her honor. "She was dedicated to uplift and helping people see that they had the potential to go forward past what they could imagine," noted Reverend Dickerson. "She was busy trying to get something done...I learned so much from her, we miss Edith."

## Homebuyer Highlight Annette Gaunt



About a year after first working with MANNA, D.C. native Annette Gaunt purchased her first home in December 2019.

Annette utilized both MANNA's Homeownership Center and DHCD's Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) in order to make her dream of purchasing a home become a reality.

Like many first time homebuyers, Annette dealt with obstacles in the HPAP program, but cited the Homebuyer's Club's sense of community as an aid in her success. "Other homebuyers helped me get through the process because everyone deals with that," she said. "They encouraged me to get through the process."

Annette also thanks MANNA acting as a resource throughout this process. "MANNA gave me the support, the knowledge that I needed to move forward," she said. "If it wasn't for MANNA, I wouldn't have gotten through step one, because I was confused...They helped me to understand...They were always there to explain and talk to me until I understood exactly what I needed to."

With closing costs and signautres finalized, Annette found one last, but welcome, surprise in the process--overwhelming joy and pride in her new home. "I was too excited to sleep because it was mine. There are no words to describe that feeling when you get your first home."

While their home buying process may be finalized, both Annette and her daughter continue their involvement with MANNA. "I'm always looking for more information, so I still talk to Griselda and TC. They always have something to offer even though I have my home," she says.

Annette believes many current renters could benefit from home ownership, saying, "a lot of people complain about rent being high...I try to convince them to join a homeowner program."

"It's an excellent program," Annette said of MANNA. "A lot of people are afraid, but I encourage them to take that chance."



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OUR COMMUNITY AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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